

ROSEVILLE LEGEND

The Official Publication of the Roseville Historical Society

Fall 2008

The Real (Brown) & McCoy

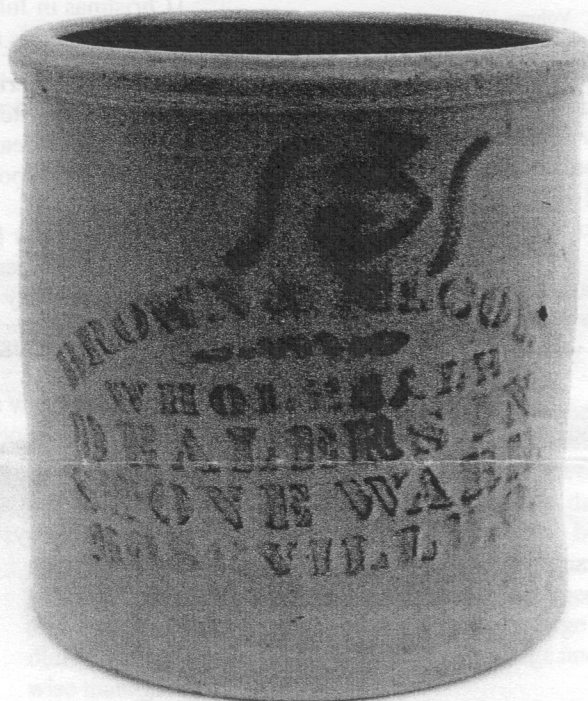
By James L. Murphy and Carole E. Williams

A rare stoneware crock stenciled in cobalt with the words "**BROWN & MCCOY WHOLESALE DEALERS IN STONEWARE ROSEVILLE, O.**" presents three intriguing questions: Who was Brown? Was there ever a **Brown & McCoy Pottery**? What role did **Brown & McCoy** play in the pottery industry of Roseville?

There is no doubt that the McCoy in question was **James W. McCoy** (1848-1914), founder in 1899 of the **J. W. McCoy Pottery Company** but who was the Brown in **Brown & McCoy**? Some have surmised that he was **James W. McCoy's** father-in-law and that the two were partners in a Roseville pottery from 1871 until 1876, when McCoy operated his own general merchandise store.

Unfortunately, McCoy's wife, **Sarah "Sade" Brown McCoy**, has sometimes been misidentified as the daughter of **William C. Brown** (1827-1905). He was a potter in the Crooksville area from at least 1860 to 1880, after which he opened a store in Crooksville. There is a crock stenciled "**W. C. Brown Depot Crooksville, O.**" in the same fashion as the stencil on the Brown & McCoy piece, and these crocks no doubt were sold at **W.C. Brown's** store. **William C. Brown** was, in fact, related to Sarah, being a half-uncle of her father James, but a contemporary in age.

Who then was **James W. McCoy's** father-in-law? For the answer we look at another partnership between **Brown & McCoy** which occurred on April 28, 1870 in Roseville. On that day 21 year-old **Sarah Elizabeth Brown**, daughter of **James E. and Lucy Ann Sowers Brown**, became the bride of 22 year-old **James William McCoy**, son of **William Nelson and Esther Brown McCoy** of Putnam, Springfield Township., Muskingum County. The young couple



Brown & McCoy were wholesale dealers of stoneware in Roseville from 1872 to 1888. Our research concludes that they were not partners in a pottery business. [Photo courtesy of James L. Murphy]

made their first home in Uniontown, Newton Township, Muskingum County, where James operated a dry goods store. The following year the McCoys moved to Roseville, and it was here **James W. McCoy** partnered with his father-in-law, **James E. Brown** in a general merchandising store. Mr. Brown, who had been in the mercantile business at Roseville since 1844, was a capable mentor to young **James McCoy**. Their business partnership became known as **Brown & McCoy**.

As mentioned, some have been led to believe that these two men were partners in a Roseville pottery named **Brown & McCoy**. Our research of the Roseville tax duplicates at the

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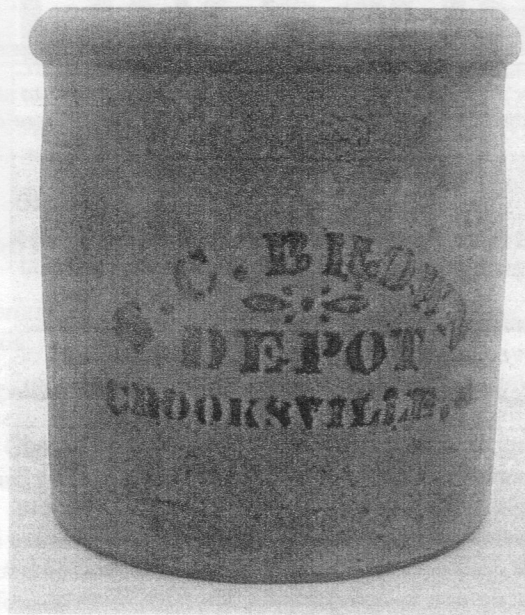
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Muskingum County Records office in Zanesville provided not only the answer to the question regarding their business relationship but also documented where the firm was located. **Brown & McCoy** first appeared in the tax duplicate in 1872 when the company paid \$3,400 in personal property taxes. By 1888, the last year the company was listed, personal property taxes had risen to \$6,450. Most importantly, the 1884 tax duplicate identified the location of **Brown & McCoy** as occupying 26 by 65 feet in the northeast corner of Lot 23 in Roseville. While **Brown & McCoy** paid personal taxes on the northeastern corner of Lot 23, real property taxes for the entire lot were paid by **James Brown**, indicating that **Brown & McCoy** was solely a business arrangement and the Brown was the sole owner of the property. This lot, on the southwest corner of First and Main Streets in Roseville, is now a vacant.

After 1888, **James E. Brown**, at 68 years of age, went on to establish a furniture store in a new building on First Street., now a private residence. He also partnered with and supported his son **George W. Brown** who opened a general store on the northwest corner of First and Main Street (**James Brown & Son** are first listed in the 1888 personal property tax duplicate.) **James E. Brown** died in 1907 at age 88.

James W. McCoy, was a partner in the **Williams & McCoy Pottery Company** (subsequently the **Kildow, Williams and McCoy Pottery Company**, and later the **Midland Pottery Company** of Roseville) before establishing the **J. W McCoy Pottery** in 1899. He, with the assistance of his son, Arthur, continued operating a general merchandising store along with his pottery ventures until his death in his 67th year in 1914.

We have established that **James E. Brown** and his son-in-law **James W. McCoy** were merchants, who operated under the name of **Brown & McCoy** from 1872-1888 on Main Street, Roseville. We find no evidence that their partnership included the manufacture of pottery but were simply wholesale dealers of stoneware, as the stenciling on the crock indicates. As merchants they provided a valuable service by merchandising and marketing the products of the many small local potteries.



William C Brown was a potter from approximately 1860 until 1880 in the Crooksville-area He subsequently opened a store in Crooksville. [Photo courtesy of James L. Murphy.]

About the Authors:

James L. Murphy is an Emeritus Professor, Ohio State University Libraries, Columbus, Ohio. He has been a contributor to the Roseville Legend for the past 10 years.

Carole J. Williams is a Brown family historian. She has been researching and compiling family histories for over 15 years

Roseville Historical Society

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